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This series of work has been developed from researching *Elizabethan blackwork* embroidery and also decorative suits of armour dating from the 16th & 17th Century.

Elizabethan blackwork embroidery is a distinct genre of decorative needlework and is also known as Spanish work, believed to have migrated to England and made popular by Catherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry VIII.

In parallel, suits of steel armour of the period were often embellished with combinations of engraving, punched tool work, gilding and latterly acid etched to emulate the richly decorative surfaces of woven brocades and embroidered cloth.

The extraordinary effect of *blackwork* embroidery owes its distinctiveness to the contrast of black silk thread worked on white linen. Along with traditional embroidery stitches, new stitching styles were developed to emulate woodblock printing such as the 'speckled stitch' - these stitches gave the unusual effect of three dimensional drawings worked onto flat cloth.

Studying this embroidery I noticed the random disappearance of the black silk. Due to the high thread count of the woven linen, the embroiderer's needle and thread indelibly punctured the cloth. Further investigation revealed that iron was used as a mordant to fix the black dye. The natural corrosive properties of iron have meant that over time the black silk is self- destructing, thereby leaving behind perforated cloth and a trace of a past age.

Chasing the steel sheet from the reverse, firing multiple layers of enamel, the selective removal of the enamel to reveal hidden depths, in some cases rubbing right through the steel producing holes; there is an analogy here one can draw between the order of this process of making and the collected layers of history. Each reflected upon, selected and distilled over time.

As is traditional in embroidery the reverse is as important as the front. On all of these pieces (except the neckpiece titled Fold) there is an oval portal cut out of the linen embossed silver sheet. The intention to focus the eye towards detail as if looking through a magnifying glass.